

Kosmas Urges President Obama to Appoint New NASA Administrator without Delay

Leads Colleagues in Bipartisan Letter Expressing Need for an Administrator Who Will Minimize the Spaceflight Gap

(Washington, DC) — Today, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) led 13 of her colleagues from the bipartisan NASA House Action Team in sending a letter to President Obama urging him to name a new NASA administrator as soon as possible.

The NASA House Action Team, which Kosmas co-chairs along with Republican Ken Calvert (CA-44), is a bipartisan group of legislators from across the country who have made advocating for NASA one of their top priorities. The team's letter to the president expressed the urgent need to provide NASA with decisive leadership to guide the agency through upcoming challenges, such as the pending spaceflight gap.

"The direction that NASA takes as we move into the next decade will have a significant impact on our community's economic outlook," said Congresswoman Kosmas. "Thousands of jobs at Kennedy Space Center and tens of thousands across Central Florida are at risk due to the pending spaceflight gap. NASA needs a long-term leader with a vision for minimizing the gap and protecting jobs. I strongly urge the president to name a new administrator without delay."

Kosmas also reiterated her opposition to setting a hard deadline for retiring the Space Shuttle. Current plans allow for up to nine future launches, but only if they can be completed before 2010.

"As the recent delays in launching Discovery have shown, a Shuttle launch schedule can be unpredictable," said Kosmas. "Setting a hard deadline for Shuttle retirement could cause schedule pressure and risk jobs. We should give NASA flexibility in the schedule in order to maintain safety and retain a highly skilled workforce."

The full text of the NASA House Action Team's letter can be found below:

Dear President Obama:

We write to you as Members of Congress with an abiding interest in the important contributions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA has been a leading catalyst for innovation and technology development and has enjoyed over 50 years of broad public interest and strong bipartisan political support. The agency's work is linked to larger issues facing our country such as national security, climate change and American competitiveness. Currently, NASA faces numerous time-sensitive challenges and needs decisive leadership.

One of the most important issues facing NASA and our nation is the impending retirement of the Space Shuttle, and the

subsequent five year gap in independent U.S. access to the International Space Station before the Ares 1 and Orion systems can be deployed. This issue has been identified by the Government Accountability Office as one of thirteen “urgent” items for your administration to address. As you know, this issue is linked to our economic recovery since the gap could result in layoffs for several thousand highly skilled aerospace engineers and technicians over the next two years.

We believe it is imperative for NASA to have a leader who understands the implications of a five year or longer hiatus in America’s independent access to space. The new NASA Administrator should grasp the broad strategic and international aspects of NASA’s mission, as well as the technical, budgetary and programmatic tradeoffs that lie ahead. We urge you to keep these issues in mind as you search for a NASA Administrator candidate with the right background, integrity and focus on minimizing the spaceflight gap and preserving the agency’s cutting edge science and aeronautics programs. Maintaining a focused policy and providing the necessary funding to allow NASA to succeed are essential to the technological advances and scientific discoveries that benefit all Americans.

We fully recognize the difficult challenges our nation faces, and we believe that a focused and properly funded NASA can aid our national economy and contribute to our shared goals of sustaining our technological edge and competing on a global stage.

We look forward to working with you and a new Administrator to ensure a robust, successful NASA. We stand ready to work together with you and continue providing the nation’s civilian space and aeronautics agency our steadfast support.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Kosmas (D-FL)

Ken Calvert (R-CA)

Robert Aderholt (R-AL)

John Culberson (R-TX)

Al Green (D-TX)

Parker Griffith (D-AL)

Ralph Hall (R-TX)

Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)

Michael McCaul (R-TX)

Pete Olson (R-TX)

Bill Posey (R-FL)

Adam Schiff (D-CA)

Lamar Smith (R-TX)

Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL)

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